Poem by Simon Armitage

**Diction**

**Words with positive and negative/judging connotations.**

**Positive**

saved

church

laughing

praise

nurse

tucked

**Judging/Negative**

slippered

lied

punched

blubbed

lifted ten quid

‘**And’ begins each line**

makes it look like the continuation of a list or conversation – like this poem is the middle of something – the ‘and ‘ creates the sense that things are just piling on – like you could go on and on with more examples – that this poem is an excerpt from a longer list. The ‘and’ suggests that this is a snapshot of his life, and by extension everybody’s life.

**Rhythm**

he took a spade and tossed it to one side

ˇ / ˇ / ˇ / ˇ / ˇ /

This is iambic pentameter – five ‘feet’ of iambs. There are fourteen lines in the poem – it is a sonnet. However, Armitage doesn’t follow the traditional Shakespearean rhyme of abab cdcd efef gg. Instead, this poem rhymes aaaa bbbb cccc dd, with some half rhymes.

He uses rhythm and breaks in the rhythm to point out or strengthen the impact of words:

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | And if it snowed and snow covered the drive  he took a spade and tossed it to one side.  And always tucked his daughter up at night  And slippered her the one time that she lied.  And every week he tipped up half his wage.  And what he didn't spend each week he saved.  And praised his wife for every meal she made.  And once, for laughing, punched her in the face*. caesura break*  c / c / c / c / c /  And for his mum he hired a private nurse.  And every Sunday taxied her to church.  And he blubbed when she went from bad to worse.  And twice he lifted ten quid from her purse.  Here's how they rated him when they looked back:  sometimes he did this, sometimes he did that. | |